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A TWELFTH-CENTURY GOSPELS MANUSCRIPT.

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AMONG the manuscripts already gathered in the museum of the Newberry Library, Chicago, is one of especial interest to biblical students. It is a finely executed Greek manuscript, containing the four gospels, complete, without the omission of a page. A double page of this manuscript, in facsimile, is presented as frontispiece of this magazine.¹

The manuscript has been assigned with a high degree of probability to the twelfth century, and thus is to be ranked with perhaps four complete Greek cursives of the gospels, of equal antiquity, known to be in the United States. The manuscript consists of 211 parchment leaves, each 13 x 8.6^{cm}, making a book a little smaller than the familiar 16mo. edition of the Revised Version. Beside the gospels, the manuscript contains the ordinary apparatus in the way of subscriptions, summaries, and chapter lists. Thus after Matthew, with which the book begins, follow three considerable subscriptions relating to the origin, contents, and history of the first gospel. Then follows a similar paragraph dealing with Mark. Next is given the list of chapter titles for Mark, forty-eight in all, with the twenty-seventh of which the left-hand page of the facsimile begins. The division of Mark into forty-eight chapters, and of Matthew, Luke, and John into sixty-eight, eighty-three, and eighteen respectively, is an ancient one, appearing in as early a manuscript as the Codex Alexandrinus of the fifth century. The chapter title at the head of the left-hand page—*περὶ τῶν διαλογιζομένων τίς μείζων*, "Concerning those who reasoned which was greater"—refers of course to the latter part of our ninth of Mark. The last chapter, the

¹ A collation of the readings of this manuscript has been prepared by the writer and will appear in January.



THE NEWBERRY GOSPELS

From a photograph by Horton Carr

forty-eighth, is entitled *περὶ τῆς αἰτήσεως τοῦ σώματος τοῦ κυρίου*, "Concerning the asking of the body of the Lord."

The rudely written verses at the foot of the left-hand page are evidently by another hand than that which wrote the chapter list above them, and were added in this convenient gap probably long after. It will be observed that the scribe omitted the initial letters of his lines, except the second, and left a space toward the outer margin in which to write them in capitals. But for some reason the capitals were never supplied. The insertion of these Marcan hexameters is interesting in view of the fact that Mark alone of the evangelists already had, at the end of his gospel, a metrical subscription of six lines devoted to him. Perhaps this very fact suggested to the later scribe the addition of these hexameters from some other manuscript.

The words at the top of the second page—*κυριακῇ πρὸ τῶν φώτων*, "For the Sunday before the Lights," that is, before Epiphany—are to indicate the day for which the opening verses of Mark (1-8) constituted the church lesson. Hardly a page of the manuscript is free from these lectionary indications, special readings being given for every day of every week. The baptism of Jesus was one of the things especially commemorated by the Greek church at Epiphany; from the thought of illumination at baptism indeed the name "Lights" by which the day is designated is believed to have arisen;¹ hence the fitness of these eight verses on the Sunday before, while vss. 1-9 composed the lesson for matins on the feast day itself.

The painted miniature which appears on the second page brings us to a striking feature of this manuscript.² Each gospel is prefaced with such a painting, done in six colors, and surrounded on four sides by a decorative border, in which the earlier Π-shape, open at the bottom, is hardly traceable. The evangelist is represented seated before a desk, on which is spread a double page of manuscript, while the oriental combination of

Cf. also the words of Asterius, bishop of Amaseia in Pontus, about 400 A. D.: *φῶτα πανήγυριν ἀγομεν ἐπειδὴ τῇ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ἀφέσει, οἷον ἐκ σκοτεινοῦ τινος δεσμωτηρίου τοῦ προτέρου βίου, πρὸς τὸν φωτεινὸν καὶ ἀνεύθυνον ἀναγόμεθα.* (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. 40, p. 216, C.)

² See the frontispiece of this number of the BIBLICAL WORLD.

pen-case and ink-bottle lies near. These miniatures give evidence of having been produced with the utmost care and no little skill, but unfortunately only this one of them is in perfect preservation. So minutely are the details executed that probably few who see this miniature observe the pen which the evangelist holds in his right hand. The painting was evidently done over a gold ground, for where the colors have been worn away the gold leaf appears. In the miniature of John there is little left on this ground save the face of the evangelist, with its halo. This face is a remarkable example of mediæval art: for, despite its diminutive size, it is full of benign and venerable dignity. In harmony with the precedence due Matthew and John as apostles, they are represented in chairs, while Mark and Luke are seated on stools. Indeed, John's chair is a veritable throne, possibly in token of the ecclesiastical eminence tradition assigns to him in his later years. It has been said that two manuscript leaves stand on the desk before each evangelist, in these little paintings. In the case of John, however, the leaves do not appear, but across the desk is thrown a roll, inscribed on both sides. Doubtless the mediæval painter had in mind the words of the Apocalypse: "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a roll, written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals."

The reader who compares the opening lines of Mark, given below the miniature, with the Received Text will observe their entire agreement. If compared with Westcott and Hort, on the other hand, almost every line of the four verses will show a divergence. The numeral letters beside these lines, in the outer margin, are the section and canon numbers, which go back to the time of Eusebius and are found in manuscripts as early as the fifth century. The letters *α*, *β*, *γ* mark the sections into which, quite independently of the chapters mentioned above, the gospel of Mark is divided. In this manuscript there are 239 of them in Mark; from which it will be seen how brief they are. Below *β* will be seen the letter *α*, *i. e.*, 1, which is the number of the canon to which this section of Mark belongs. The canon numbers, it should be remembered, refer to one or another of the ten canons into which Eusebius classified all the

sections in the gospels, in order to facilitate reference from one gospel to the corresponding passage in another. Thus to his first canon belong all sections having parallels in all the other gospels; to his second, sections which appear in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but not in John — that is, as we should say, triple tradition synoptic material; to his sixth, sections common to Matthew and Mark alone. The canon number β , which should stand below the section number α to show that this section belongs to the second canon, *i. e.*, has parallels in Matthew and Luke, seems to have been omitted. But the assignments of section 2 to canon 1, and of section 3 to canon 6, are quite clear. This system, it will be seen, enabled the ancient reader, by consulting the table of canons, to find the parallels, if any existed, of any section of the gospels; and thus did for him what our marginal references are designed to do for us in the gospels, and what the gospel harmonies most satisfactorily accomplish.